

REMARKS

The undersigned notes with appreciation that claim 5 has been identified as being allowed.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the substance of claim 2, and claim 2 has been canceled. As such, no new issues are raised by this amendment, and this application should now be entered for purposes of allowance or appeal. Claim 3, which previously depended on claim 2, has now been amended to depend from claim 1. The application now includes claims 1, 2, and 4-9.

Claims 1 and 9 were rejected as being obvious over JP 2000141708 to Matsunaga in view of JP 02307731 to Higashiyama. This rejection is traversed. Claim 1 has now been amended to include the substance of claim 2, and claim 9 depends on claim 1.

Claim 6 has been rejected as being obvious over Matsunaga and Higashiyama, further in view of U.S. Patent 5,750,186 to Frazzita. Claims 7 and 8 have been rejected as being obvious over Matsunaga and Higashiyama further in view of U.S. Patent 6,626,531 to Fujii. Both rejections are traversed in view of the amendment to claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to include subject matter of claim 2, and claims 6-8 depend from claim 1. Frazzita and Fujii do not make up for the deficiencies of Matsunaga and Fujii with respect to the added subject matter originally found in claim 2.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected as being obvious over Matsunaga and Higashiyama further in view of U.S. Patent 6,783,227 to Suzuki. Claim 4 was rejected as being obvious over Matsunaga and Higashiyama further in view of U.S. Patent 4,952,444 to Kawamata. These rejections are traversed.

As best can be determined, Matsunaga is being relied upon as showing a clear overcoat film being formed by droplet ejection from a coating head 25 (Figure 1 and paragraph 29). As admitted by the Examiner, Matsunaga does not show or suggest curing droplets while they are in flight. Furthermore, since Matsunaga does not discuss curing, it also does not discuss a curing intensity of said curing step that is to be performed on said droplets is adjusted in accordance with the image as recorded on said recording medium (as is required in amended claim 1). Higashiyama has been relied upon as teaching curing of droplets flying from a recording head (abstract). While Higashiyama describes applying light irradiation on the droplets in flight to partially cure the droplets, Higashiyama has no teaching whatsoever that a curing intensity of the curing step is to be performed on the droplets where the intensity is adjusted in accordance with the image as recorded

on the recording medium. Claim 1, as amended, includes the feature of now canceled claim 2 and requires that the curing intensity is adjusted in accordance with the recorded image. The Examiner has incorrectly relied on Suzuki as teaching this feature. In fact, Suzuki teaches away from permitting curing before the droplets hit the recording medium. In particular, in Suzuki, a radiation range of ultraviolet rays is narrowed by a side surface 10b as shown in Figures 5a and 5b. This is in order NOT to permit curing before the ink particles hit the recording medium 99 as described in column 12, lines 27-28. Thus, Suzuki cannot properly be combined with Higashiyama or any other prior art which causes droplets to cure before the droplets hit the print medium, as Suzuki specifically teaches limiting the radiation range of ultraviolet rays in order to NOT permit curing before the ink particle hit the recording medium 99.

Furthermore, with respect to column 9, lines 18-27 of Suzuki which were referenced by the Examiner, it should be understood that this portion of Suzuki only describes that a wave length, a radiation intensity and the like are properly set in accordance with the material of the recording medium 99, but it does not describe adjusting in accordance with the image as recorded on the recording medium. Firstly, the droplets to be cured in Suzuki are to the droplets of image ink to draw an image. Therefore, there is no image already recorded on the recording medium to which the droplets hit.

In view of the above, no combination of Matsunaga, Higashiyama and Suzuki would make claim 1 (or its dependent claims) obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

With respect to claim 4, it is noted first that Kawamata lacks the feature of that a curing intensity of the curing step is to be performed on the droplets where the intensity is adjusted in accordance with the image as recorded on the recording medium. As such, claim 4 cannot be obvious over any combination of Matsunaga, Higashiyama and Kawamata (and Suzuki, although this reference was not cited in the rejection of claim 4). Furthermore, claim 4 recites that surface roughness of the coating layer is adjusted by changing the viscosity of the droplets. Kawamata, at column 3, lines 1-14, referenced by the Examiner, does not describe changing the viscosity of the droplet in flight. Rather, Kawamata only describes adjusting the viscosity of the coating solution, not the viscosity of the droplets. In view of the above, claim 4 is not obvious over any combination of references of record.

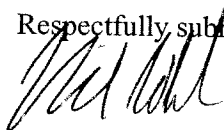
Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection are respectfully sought. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1, 2, and

4- 9 be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephone or personal interview.

A provisional petition is hereby made for any extension of time necessary for the continued pendency during the life of this application. Please charge any fees for such provisional petition and any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2041.

Respectfully submitted,



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